

Disaster Mitigation Education to Raise Good Citizens

-Understanding the International World through Disaster Mitigation Education

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Curriculum vitae

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Summary

1. Expansion of Disaster Mitigation Education

The purpose of disaster mitigation education is to protect one's life. But it is not enough. It is first necessary to be prepared for disasters and to get flexible attitude against disasters depending on the circumstances enough to protect one's life, the family lives, and one's belongings when one encounters disasters. After you find you are safe, however, you need to take many actions. You take emergent actions like rescuing the people in danger of losing their lives, curing them if possible, and taking them to hospital. After a while, though your daily life will be back into the situation like the one before the disaster, you still notice that there are many people unable to escape from the difficult and inconvenient daily life. It is also very important to support these people. Even if you are not in the affected area but you hear the news of disasters somewhere far away, you can go to the affected area to support them or if it is impossible for you to visit there because of your job or simply because of the distance, you can send your donation, cheering messages, and relief goods. Thus, people not only "protect their own lives" but also "rescue people just after they become safe", "support people in the affected area", "come from far away to support the affected people", and "support the affected people from far away".

There is one more important point of view in disaster mitigation education. It is frequently pointed out that no one can do anything else except the actions they have ever been trained at the time of disasters. I would like to indicate here that people were able to implement during Kobe Earthquake what they had never been trained. They cooked emergent dishes for more than 1,000 people at one time. They rescued the buried victims under the debris. They cleaned the ultimately dirty toilets. They took the roles of volunteers and coordinators in the refuges. They connected the needs of the affected people to the supporters. All these actions were taken without the training in advance. What made these actions possible was the daily capacity of people. They put their daily capacity to emergent disaster managements. The purpose of disaster mitigation education is to raise these daily capacities which can be put into emergent managements. Maiko High School has such a wide point of view in disaster mitigation education. That's why the education is implemented not only in the classroom to gain the amount of knowledge but also in outside of school to implement fieldworks, to make safety map with the pupils of elementary school nearby, to take part in and give presentations at workshops of disasters and volunteer activities, and to listen to the stories of the people affected by Kobe Earthquake. These active and practical educations make the students gain the daily capacities.

2. International Understanding and Support through Disaster Mitigation Education

International exchanges are important in disaster mitigation course at Maiko High School. One of the important activities is to invite the foreigners into the classroom. They are the officers of governments, disaster experts, teachers, doctors and nurses invited to Japan by United Nations Center for Regional Development, Japan International Corporation Agency, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, and Hyogo Emergency Medical Center in order to have training in Japan. They visit Maiko High School to learn disaster mitigation education and to have an exchange with the students in one of the programs of their educational seminar. The students talk about their experiences of Kobe Earthquake, what they have learned in the disaster mitigation course, and show their future dreams. The visitors talk about their home country, disasters and disaster managements. The students are surprised to hear that the disaster management, which seems natural to implement in Japan, is not implemented in some developing countries. The students learn that disaster mitigation comes next to making a living in some poor countries. They also learn that there are many regions and nations involved in conflicts and wars.

Another activity is to visit the foreign countries to have international exchanges. We had visited Katmandu in Nepal in the summer from 2002 to 2005. One of the purposes is to learn the activity called "School Safety Program" implemented by National Society for Earthquake Technology in Nepal (NSET-Nepal: NGO). In the course of the retrofit of the school buildings, not only the educational boards, teachers, administrations, and masons, but also the students and community members are involved in the meetings to raise the awareness to cope with the coming earthquake disaster, which gives us a lot of lessons to learn. They have developed a wise method to let the people in low literacy and low percentages of school attendance know the importance of earthquake preparedness and disaster management. One of the methods is to show the experiment of house destruction on a shaking table. One of the houses on the table is engineered to cope with earthquake and one is not engineered. They shake the table and show that only the engineered house can stand and remain. This is called "Accountability." They collect the donation and use the materials they can take in the area. They don't use a huge amount of money. This is called "Affordability." If the NGO supporting the community move to another place and stop the support to the area, they can't continue the construction of the engineered houses in the area. To avoid this situation to occur, they give systematic training to the masons during the real constructions. This is called "Sustainability." These three principles are kept in their implementation. To learn such wisdom from the developing country is one of the main purposes.

The second purpose of our visit is to tell our experiences during Kobe Earthquake and let them know the importance of preparedness. The third purpose is the cultural exchange. We visit the school there to exchange the cultural boxes, to see and show the traditional and contemporary dances, and to sing song together. We home stay in a village and experience the Nepali life. We acquire our cosmopolitan outlook.

In 2006, we visited Sri Lanka, one of the most affected countries by Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster. We visited the south to have a good exchange program with a high school and some kindergartens, to see the real affected areas, to home stay at a high school boy's house, who came to Kobe in January. We had such a good time with the children who lost their guardians and houses to play soccer and badminton. We presented 5 big pictures to the children, which the children in Kobe had painted for them. We sent some messages from the students of Maiko High School. We held a trauma counseling seminar twice, in which the high school boys in Kobe, 11 and 8 months after the earthquake, talked to the teachers in Sri Lanka, one year and 8 months after the Tsunami, about their experiences in the Kobe Earthquake, what they are now learning at Maiko High School and their dreams in the future. This is a message that the children in Kobe 11 years 8 months after the Kobe Earthquake will show the future to the children in Sri Lanka one year and 8 months after the Tsunami.

In Colombo we visited the camps. They are the camps for the Tamiru and Islam with the tents or the wooden houses with tin roofs. They were forced to get out until the end of August, but they had not found their next houses yet. I heard that the government had already stopped the supply of water and electricity. We talked with the inhabitants and the supporters there and the students enjoy playing soccer with the

children.

We convey what we experienced there to the students of Maiko High in the time of integrated study or at the lessons of Disaster Mitigation Course. We will also have opportunities to talk our experiences in the seminars held by NGOs and NPOs. We are sure to convey what we watched, experienced and thought there to Japanese people.

Through these kinds of experience the students become interested in developing countries. In Japan talking of something “international”, the students are sure to think of Western countries, while the students at Maiko High School Disaster Mitigation Course stare at the developing countries. There are such students who went to Iran to take a volunteer action at Bam, which was badly attacked by a strong earthquake, and now are majoring in agriculture and environment to support the developing countries in these fields with the purpose to implement disaster management there, and who made a group of three graduates to make a supporting activity to the developing country in the educational field, the name of which is SIDE (Support for International Disaster Education. They are still having connection with the International Exchange and Support.

Some students are learning how important to be able to use English, while some still dislike learning English. There are some students who understand English as a communication tool and mastering English better than we have expected.